

Tom Kelly
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TO: City of Bridgeport Ethics Commission: Mary Donnelly, Joseph Ianniello, Harry Weichsel, Robert Fillotei, Lizette Garay

FR: Tom Kelly

DATE: August 3, 2011

RE: Complaint against Mayor Bill Finch, Chief of Staff Adam Wood and William Beccaro

This memo is a formal complaint against Mayor Bill Finch, Chief of Staff Adam Wood, and William Beccaro, legal consultant for the City of Bridgeport. The aforementioned persons have violated the below portions of **Section 2.38.030 Standards of conduct:**

A. General Prohibition. No official or employee shall have any interest, financial or otherwise, direct or indirect, or engage in any business employment, transaction or professional activity, or incur any obligation of any nature, which is in substantial conflict with the proper discharge of his duties or employment in the public interest and of his responsibilities as prescribed in the provisions of this chapter.

B. Specific Conflicts. No official or employee shall:

1. Solicit or accept any gift, directly or indirectly, whether in the form of money, loan, gratuity, favor, service, thing, or promise, or in any other form, under circumstances in which it can reasonably be inferred that the gift is intended to influence him in the performance of his duties or employment in the public interest. Nothing herein shall preclude the solicitation or acceptance of lawful contributions for election campaigns;

Mr. Becarro is a long-time friend and associate of Mayor Bill Finch and a part-time attorney for the Connecticut Senate Democrats. Mayor Bill Finch has employed Mr. Beccaro at \$91,000 a year to perform strategy, planning, and legal consulting for the City of Bridgeport. Mr. Becarro is one of three persons with the same job description and who are collectively paid over \$250,000 per year for the same type of work. Mr. Beccaro also is the Treasurer for the Political Action Committee (PAC) "People for Excellence in Government." William Beccaro also became chair in 10/2004. On 1/24/2007, Mr. Beccaro's 85-year-old mother, Gloria P. Beccaro, was appointed Chairperson while Mr. Beccaro remained as Treasurer.

Prior to Mayor Finch's election in 2007, this PAC made several donations to Mr. Finch and employed his wife and son. The PAC is listed with the State Elections Enforcement Commission and, as a PAC established by two or more persons, it must comply with the rules that govern that type of PAC.

ALLEGATIONS:

There is a *quid pro quo* relationship between the “People for Excellence in Government” PAC and Mayor Finch. Finch for Mayor in 2007 contributed its surplus funds (\$46,056.37) to the PAC and Mr. Becarro and Mayor Finch are impermissibly benefiting from this relationship.

Since the time the surplus funds were deposited into the PAC, the PAC has been making expenditures and reimbursements on behalf of and to Mayor Bill Finch, his wife Sonya Finch, and members of Finch’s staff, Adam Wood, Chief of Staff, and his wife, Kerri Wood.

Mr. Becarro is employed by the City of Bridgeport as a Legal Consultant making \$91,000.00 a year.

In 2008 Mayor Finch attended a U.S. Conference of Mayors event in Washington, DC and stayed to attend the Inauguration of President Obama. In a *Connecticut Post* article dated 2/14/2009, Mayor Finch stated he used personal funds to stay for the Inauguration. However, Bill and Sonya Finch were reimbursed \$826.03 – for food, transportation, postage, Amtrak, Big Y, Barnes and Noble, Waldenbooks via ck #1216. On the same day, William Beccaro was reimbursed for expenses for the 2009 Presidential Inaugural with ck #1217.

Adam Wood was reimbursed \$2,348.39 on the same day for reimbursement of Staples, UPS, Marriott, Testo’s, Metric, and State Street Bistro expenditures. The Marriott was for a stay in Washington, DC. (See below.)

The “City of Bridgeport” was reimbursed by this PAC on 3/5/2009 for \$571.75 with no description, ck #1218.

No separate receipts are on file explaining the details of each expense.

The City of Bridgeport also may have paid Mayor Finch for his conference in Washington, DC.

The PAC has been reimbursing the Mayor and his spouse, Sonya Finch, for personal expenses and non-PAC related expenses. (See below.)

Mayor Finch attended the Democratic National Convention with his spouse, Sonya, and was reimbursed on 9/26/2008 for \$3,954.61 – under the heading of RCW – for attending the Democratic National Convention (DNC). The Mayor was a delegate to that convention.

Mr. Beccaro was reimbursed on 9/26/2008 \$6,434.19 for the DNC.

Sonya Finch, the mayor’s wife, has been reimbursed for purchases at TJ Maxx, Target, charitable donations, and Christmas gifts.

Sonya Finch and her company, Emerald Consulting, have been paid consulting fees without details and without written contracts.

According to the Bridgeport Code of ethics:

“The proper operation of democratic government requires that public officials, employees and other persons involved in the governmental process, and in the services rendered by government, be independent, impartial and responsible to the people. They shall demonstrate by their example the highest standards of ethical conduct, to the end that the public may justifiably have trust and confidence in the integrity of government. As agents of public purpose, public interest must be the foremost concern. They shall hold their offices or positions for the benefit of the public and shall faithfully discharge their duties, placing the good of the city above any personal or partisan consideration. Public office must not be used for personal gain.

“Officials and employees have a responsibility by virtue of the trust vested in them by their employment or oath of office to discharge their duties conscientiously, impartially and to the best of their ability. Officials and employees will conduct themselves with propriety, discharge their duties fairly and make continuing efforts towards attaining and maintaining high standards of ethical conduct.”

There is a clear appearance that Mayor Finch is receiving financial benefit from the PAC in exchange for Beccaro’s \$91,000.00 job with a nebulous job description. The Code goes on to state that even the mere appearance of this type of relationship is a violation. In this case there is not only an appearance of impropriety, but the actual malfeasance itself.

“Officials and employees recognize that the responsibility for ethical conduct ultimately rests with each individual. In this regard, individuals must be guided by standards of honesty, decency and morality, all consistent with the best interests of the city, and should avoid any conduct having the appearance of violating these standards.”

The Code states that, “Financial interest” means any interest, other than an interest of a *de minimus* nature.” A \$91,000.00 salary is not *de minimus*, nor are the funds received by Finch, his family, and his staff. This behavior constitutes a “Substantial conflict,” which means deriving a substantial benefit or avoiding a substantial detriment as a result of one’s official or employment activity. This is just one of the most glaring examples.

I ask that this situation be investigated and this conduct be corrected, the monies be refunded to either the PAC, the City, or both, and that the participants be punished in accordance with their level of involvement.

Finch spent \$11,000 on travel, meals Connecticut Post Online (Bridgeport, Connecticut)

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Connecticut Post Online (Bridgeport, Connecticut)

February 14, 2009 Saturday

SECTION: NEWS

LENGTH: 1093 words

HEADLINE: Review: Finch spent \$11,000 on travel, meals

BYLINE: By Bill Cummings Staff writer

BODY:

BRIDGEPORT -- As the city struggled to cover a looming \$20 million budget deficit, Mayor Bill Finch spent nearly \$11,000 on job-related travel last year across the country.

But the mayor's spending, at least so far, is relatively modest compared to his immediate predecessors.

Former Mayor John Fabrizi spent more than \$32,000 in 2007 traveling during his last year in office, while former Mayor Joseph Ganim spent about \$87,000 between 1996 and 2001, or an average of about \$16,000 a year.

Finch's 2008 spending, according to statements for his city-issued credit card, included thousands of dollars for meals, transportation and hotel rooms, usually while attending meetings of the U.S. Conference of Mayors. His hotel rooms often cost as much as \$500 a night.

City Council member Robert Walsh, who declines to spend any of the \$9,000 stipend provided to councilors, said he's glad Finch's spending is less than past mayors, but added there is still little justification for it.

"I would think the mayor would have a hard time justifying it to a city employee who has been laid off why he spent \$10,000 to attend conferences. It still doesn't seem that people get it. Next July 1, it's the taxpayers who will be asked to give a lot," Walsh said.

During his first year in office, Finch traveled to Washington, New York City and Miami. Three of those trips revolved around meetings of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, while the Miami trip was to meet with RCI Marine, the city's Steel Point developer, which is based in Miami Beach.

Finch also attended President Barack Obama's inauguration, which came several days after a mayor's conference in Washington. **Finch said he used his own money to stay a few extra days to attend Obama's swearing-in ceremony.**

The mayor last August attended Obama's nomination in Denver during the Democratic National Convention, but did not charge any expenses to the city other than an \$80 meal at Marlowe's Restaurant. Finch said the dinner was a meeting with Jeff Leichtman, a consultant with the Bridgeport Regional Business Council for the city's BGreen 2020 initiative.

Finch's meals ranged from \$611 at Tuscany Ristorante in Bridgeport for a dinner with state economic development officials, to a \$14 lunch at Wendy's, where the mayor had a chicken sandwich, french fries and a diet Coke.

"We are trying to be conservative," Finch said. "While Tuscany was wonderful, I don't think we will have dinner

there again. The times have changed and we have to be frugal. We are scaling back on everything. I've made a conscious effort to not be lavish."

Finch said attending two or three meetings of the U.S. Conference of Mayors each year is beneficial to Bridgeport.

"I think the conference of mayors is an important concession to make. I've met Obama's top staff there. It's a unique opportunity to talk to them about Bridgeport. We also steal ideas from each other. You become aware of so many things," Finch said.

By comparison, Fabrizi's spending in 2007, during his final year in office, is far more extensive. The then-mayor attended conferences in Washington, Miami, New Orleans, Seattle, Las Vegas, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Fort Lauderdale and Nashville.

Fabrizi also ate at top restaurants, spending nearly \$1,200 for one meal at Arnauds in New Orleans. Fabrizi said the dinner was attended by various City Council members and several mayors, all of whom were attending a National League of Cities meeting.

"That's the cost of doing business around the country, but it brings benefits," said Fabrizi. "I tried to not pay when I could."

Fabrizi said spending during his final year was higher than previous years in office because he was "closing out" relationships around the country. The former mayor was out of town for most of the period between Oct. 31, 2007, and Nov. 19, 2007.

He also said he often used a city credit card to cover the cost of meals and lodging for staff members and sometimes took council members out to dinner.

"I wasn't looking for an excuse to get out of town. There were a number of workshops and conferences that I went to for a number of reasons. I did a lot of work with the National League of Cities and some was very beneficial to the city. There were a number of folks who I wanted to catch up with and close out my work," Fabrizi said.

Fabrizi pointed out that he obtained a bookmobile in Seattle for a bargain price and found a private donor to pay the \$100,000 price tag.

Asked about Fabrizi's spending, Finch said the former mayor's bill for his last year in office was "excessive," and likened his trips to taking a last lap before leaving office.

"This not a job you are entitled to take laps on," Finch said.

A look at Finch's meal charges show less frequency than Fabrizi but a similar appetite for fine dining.

For example, Finch charged \$417 for a meal at Il Cortile Restaurant on Mulberry Street in Little Italy. Finch said the meal was shared by Joel Klein, chancellor of New York's schools, whom he met to discuss education issues.

He spent \$233 dining at Smith and Wollensky, a posh Washington, D.C., steak house.

The mayor ate locally as well, spending \$100 at the State Street Bistro during a meal with City Council member Robert Curwen and Adam Wood, Finch's chief of staff.

Asked if drinks were included in his restaurant charges, Finch said they probably were. The mayor then admitted that after he read a recent story about how council members routinely charged drinks to their stipend, he's been wondering if that's proper.

"I never thought about that, but maybe we need to consider a ban on it. They should pay for drinks themselves," the mayor said.

Finch also reimbursed the city for several expenses charged to his city credit card, including \$91 for airport parking and \$37 for groceries at Stop & Shop. Pricey meals Here are some of the meals Bridgeport Mayor Bill Finch charged on his city-issued credit card. In all, Finch spent nearly \$11,000 on job-related travel expenses in 2008. \$611 at Tuscany Ristorante in Bridgeport for a dinner with state economic development officials. \$417 for a meal at Il Cortile Restaurant on Mulberry Street in New York's Little Italy with Joel Klein, chancellor of New York's schools, whom he met to discuss education issues. an \$80 meal at Marlow's Restaurant in Denver during the Democratic National Convention. Finch paid his own way to attend. \$233 for dining at Smith and Wollensky, a posh Washington, D.C., steak house. \$100 at Bridgeport's State Street Bistro during a meal with City Council member Robert Curwen and Adam Wood, Finch's chief of staff.

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Disbursement Search Results

Committee	Committee Type	Payee Name	Purpose of Expenditure	Description	City	State	Method of Payment	Date of Payment	Amount	File to State	Election Year	Status	DS	R-FE	Party Affiliation
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	Bill & Sonya Finch	RCW (Reimburse committee workers)	Reimbursement	BRIDGEPORT	CT	Check	03/05/2009	826.03	04/11/2009		Original	Data Entry	NO	
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	Bill & Sonya Finch	RCW (Reimburse committee workers)	2008 Democratic National Convention	BRIDGEPORT	CT	Check	09/26/2008	3954.61	10/10/2008		Original	Data Entry	NO	
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	Sonya Finch	RCW (Reimburse committee workers)	supplies and meals associated with fundraiser	BRIDGEPORT	CT	Check	12/16/09	1193.41	01/11/2010		Original	Data Entry	NO	
Grogins For State Representative (SEEC30)	Candidate Committee	Sonya Finch	REF (Contributor returns or other revenue 2 refunds)	Return Of Contribution ID #	BRIDGEPORT	CT	Check	03/29/2008	100.04	04/10/2008	2008	Original	Data Entry	NO	Democrat
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	Sonya Finch	RCW (Reimburse committee workers)	Fundraising - Mileage	BRIDGEPORT	CT	Check	11/25/2008	296.65	01/12/2009		Original	Data Entry	NO	
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	Sonya Finch	RCW (Reimburse committee workers)	Xmas Gifts for Political List	BRIDGEPORT	CT	Check	12/18/2008	165.72	01/12/2009		Original	Data Entry	NO	
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	Sonya Finch	CNSLT (Payments to a professional consulting consultant)	Fundraising Consulting	BRIDGEPORT	CT	Check	10/24/2008	550.01	01/12/2009		Original	Data Entry	NO	
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	Sonya Finch	RCW (Reimburse committee workers)	Reimbursement for Political Xmas Gifts	BRIDGEPORT	CT	Check	12/15/2008	213.67	01/12/2009		Original	Data Entry	NO	
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	SONYA FINCH	FNDR (Expenses associated with holding a committee fundraiser)	FUNDRAISER EXPENSES	BRIDGEPORT	CT	Check	10/25/2010	647.03	01/10/2011		Original	Data Entry	NO	
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	SONYA FINCH	RCW-CHAR()	REIMBURSEMENT FOR CHARITY	BRIDGEPORT	CT	Check	12/02/2010	25.01	01/10/2011		Original	Data Entry	NO	
									Total Amount:	\$7,972.12					

Go to Page 1 of 1

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Committee	Committee Type	Payee Name	Purpose of Expenditure	Description	City	State	Method of Payment	Date of Payment	Amount	File to State	Election Year	Status	DS	R-FE	Party Affiliation
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	Adam Wood	RCW (Reimburse committee workers)	Reimbursement - Meals & Charitable Contributions	ROCKY HILL	CT	Check	6/21/2009	1,621.53	07/09/2009		Original	Data Entry	NO	
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	Adam Wood	RCW (Reimburse committee workers)	Reimbursement - Holiday Meals & Gifts			Check	12/31/2008	2059.6	01/12/2009		Original	Data Entry	NO	
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	Adam Wood	RCW (Reimburse committee workers)	Reimbursement	ROCKY HILL	CT	Check	03/16/2009	2348.39	04/11/2009		Original	Data Entry	NO	
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	ADAM WOOD	RCW (Reimburse committee workers)	REIMBURSEMENT FOR MEALS	BRIDGEPORT	CT	Check	10/07/2010	87.58	10/26/2010		Original	Data Entry	NO	
Total Amount:									\$6,117.10						

Go to Page 1 of 1

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<u>Committee</u>	<u>Committee Type</u>	<u>Payee Name</u>	<u>Purpose of Expenditure</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Method of Payment</u>	<u>Date of Payment</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>File to Sta</u>
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	Keri Wood	CNSLT (Payments to a professional consultant)	Political Consultant	ROCKY HILL	CT	Check	11/25/2008	1800	01/12/2009
Total Amount:									\$1,800.00	

Go to Page 1 of 1

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People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	William Beccaro	RCW (Reimburse committee workers)	2008 Democratic National Convention	ESSEX	CT	Check	09/26/2008	6434.19	10/10/
Total Amount:									\$6,434.19	

Go to Page 1 of 1

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Disbursement Search Results

Committee	Committee Type	Payee Name	Purpose of Expenditure	Description	City	State	Method of Payment	Date of Payment	Amount
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	GLORIA BECCARO	RCW - VOHD()	VERIZON - TELEPHONE, CELLULAR & INTERNET SERVICE	OLD SAYBROOK	CT	Check	01/28/2011	135.52
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	GLORIA BECCARO	RCW - VOHD()	VERIZON - TELEPHONE, CELLULAR & INTERNET SERVICE	OLD SAYBROOK	CT	Check	03/30/2011	116.15
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	GLORIA BECCARO	RCW - VOHD()	VERIZON - TELEPHONE, CELLULAR & INTERNET SERVICE	OLD SAYBROOK	CT	Check	02/27/2011	128.04
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	Gloria Beccaro	RCW (Reimburse committee workers)	Verizon - telephone, cellular & internet services	OLD SAYBROOK	CT	Check	5/24/2009	128.47
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	Gloria Beccaro	RCW (Reimburse committee workers)	Verizon - Telephone, cellular & internet	OLD SAYBROOK	CT	Check	6/26/09	131.08
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	Gloria Beccaro	RCW (Reimburse committee workers)	Verizon Wireless	OLD SAYBROOK	CT	Check	04/26/2008	242.15
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	Gloria Beccaro	RCW (Reimburse committee workers)	Verizon Wireless	OLD SAYBROOK	CT	Check	05/29/2008	182.62

People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	Gloria Beccaro	RCW (Reimburse committee workers)	Verizon Wireless	OLD SAYBROOK	CT	Check	06/27/2008	173.26
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	Gloria Beccaro	RCW (Reimburse committee workers)	Verizon	OLD SAYBROOK	CT	Check	11/25/2008	162.84
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	Gloria Beccaro	RCW (Reimburse committee workers)	Verizon	OLD SAYBROOK	CT	Check	10/24/2008	128.71
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	Gloria Beccaro	RCW (Reimburse committee workers)	Verizon	OLD SAYBROOK	CT	Check	12/23/2008	148.57
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	Gloria Beccaro	RCW-OVHD()	verizon cellular & internet services	OLD SAYBROOK	Ct	Check	1/29/10	118.56
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	Gloria Beccaro	RCW-OVHD()	verizon cellular and internet services	OLD SAYBROOK	Ct	Check	2/26/10	115.26
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	Gloria Beccaro	RCW-OVHD()	Verizon cellular & internet services	OLD SAYBROOK	Ct	Check	3/29/10	112.58
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	GLORIA BECCARO	RCW-OVHD()	VERIZON - TELEPHONE, CELLULAR & INTERNET SERVICES	OLD SAYBROOK	CT	Check	10/25/2010	132.79
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	GLORIA BECCARO	RCW-OVHD()	VERIZON-TELEPHONE, CELLULAR & INTERNET SERVICES	OLD SAYBROOK	CT	Check	11/26/2010	139.56
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	GLORIA BECCARO	RCW-OVHD()	VERIZON - TELEPHONE, CELLULAR & INTERNET SERVICES	OLD SAYBROOK	CT	Check	12/28/2010	126.38
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	Gloria Beccaro	RCW (Reimburse committee workers)	Verizon Wireless	OLD SAYBROOK	CT	Check	02/26/2008	310.14

People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	<u>Gloria Beccaro</u>	RCW (Reimburse committee workers)	Verizon Wireless	OLD SAYBROOK	CT	Check	03/25/2008	268.40
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	<u>Gloria Beccaro</u>	RCW (Reimburse committee workers)	Verizon Wireless	OLD SAYBROOK	CT	Check	01/25/2008	325.65
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	<u>Gloria Beccaro</u>	RCW (Reimburse committee workers)	Telephone, Cellular & Internet Services	OLD SAYBROOK	CT	Check	01/26/2009	126.52
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	<u>Gloria Beccaro</u>	RCW (Reimburse committee workers)	Telephone, Cellular & Internet Services	OLD SAYBROOK	CT	Check	02/25/2009	131.45
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	<u>Gloria Beccaro</u>	RCW (Reimburse committee workers)	Verizon - Telephone, Internet & Cell	OLD SAYBROOK	CT	Check	03/25/2009	128.52
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	<u>GLORIA BECCARO</u>	RCW- OVHD()	VERIZON - TELEPHONE, CELLULAR & INTERNET SERVICES	OLD SAYBROOK	CT	Check	07/24/2010	118.52
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	<u>GLORIA BECCARO</u>	RCW- OVHD()	VERIZON - TELEPHONE, CELLULAR & INTERNET SERVICES	OLD SAYBROOK	CT	Check	08/26/2010	121.68
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	<u>GLORIA BECCARO</u>	RCW- OVHD()	VERIZON - TELEPHONE, CELLULAR & INTERNET SERVICES	OLD SAYBROOK	CT	Check	09/27/2010	130.16
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	<u>Gloria Beccaro</u>	RCW- OVHD()	Verizon Cellular & Internet Services	OLD SAYBROOK	Ct	Check	12/8/09	801.42
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	<u>GLORIA BECCARO</u>	RCW- OVHD()	VERIZON CELLULAR & INTERNET SERVICES	OLD SAYBROOK	CT	Check	04/25/2010	118.96
People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)	Political Action Committee	<u>GLORIA BECCARO</u>	RCW- OVHD()	VERIZON CELLULAR & INTERNET SERVICES	OLD SAYBROOK	CT	Check	05/27/2010	114.23

<u>People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)</u>	Political Action Committee	<u>GLORIA BECCARO</u>	RCW- OVHD()	VERIZON CELLULAR & OLD INTERNET SAYBROOK SERVICES	CT	Check	06/25/2010	128.75
<u>People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)</u>	Political Action Committee	<u>Gloria Beccaro</u>	RCW (Reimburse committee workers)	Verizon Wireless	OLD SAYBROOK	CT	Check	07/29/2008 158.17
<u>People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)</u>	Political Action Committee	<u>Gloria Beccaro</u>	RCW (Reimburse committee workers)	Verizon Wireless	OLD SAYBROOK	CT	Check	08/29/2008 124.72
<u>People For Excellence In Government (SEEC20)</u>	Political Action Committee	<u>Gloria Beccaro</u>	RCW (Reimburse committee workers)	Verizon Wireless	OLD SAYBROOK	CT	Check	09/26/2008 131.55
Total Amount:								\$5,661.54

Go to Page 1 of 1

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Foster FOI Reveals \$8 Million Paid To Lawyers Financing Finch's Campaign

"The mayor's friends pay for his campaign in exchange for rich contracts at taxpayer's expense."

BRIDGEPORT, Conn. – May 26, 2011 – Bridgeport businesswoman and social action advocate Mary-Jane Foster, who is running for mayor, revealed today the preliminary findings from an FOI request regarding City of Bridgeport payments to outside law firms during the Finch administration:

In total, Mayor Finch has authorized almost \$8 million in outside legal fees since Dec. 1, 2007, with most of these taxpayer dollars going to hefty campaign contributors or their law firms. This includes the treasurer of a political action committee benefiting Bill Finch, who has received more than \$250,000 in taxpayer money purportedly for legal fees since the mayor assumed office.

"Unfortunately, the contracts for campaign cash *quid pro quo* is alive and well," said Foster. "The sinister head of pay to play is back in business. The mayor's friends pay for his campaign in exchange for rich contracts at taxpayers' expense. What work are they doing? What special qualifications do they have? How is it possible that none of the 12 city attorneys on staff are qualified to handle this work? Millions of taxpayer dollars are being squandered on the mayor's campaign contributors."

Bill Beccaro, treasurer of People for Excellence in Government, the PAC that has subsidized multiple expenses for close associates of the mayor, is among many lawyers and high profile law firms hired by the mayor who have supported his reelection. Beccaro is a principal at the Law Offices of William Beccaro. He also serves as attorney to the Connecticut Senate Democrats.

"It is impossible to serve three masters," Foster pointed out. "What is in the interest of Bill Finch may not be in the best interest of the City of Bridgeport and the City's interests most certainly will not always be in sync with the Senate Democrats, and vice versa. How does he decide which hat to wear and who gets the short end of the stick? This kind of triple dipping is outrageous. The taxpayers lose while Beccaro laughs all the way to the bank."

The mayor has authorized millions in fees to outside legal counsel financing his race. The City Attorney's Office budget has totaled roughly \$14 million in the four budgets proposed by Finch and approved by the City Council. In a classic Finch blue smoke and mirrors budget move, some of these outside legal fees are paid for by the city attorney's office while others are paid by the department having the work done making it difficult, if not impossible, to know the true amount being paid to outside law firms.

Foster added, "Violent crime is high, economic development low, unemployment at 15 percent, fiscal chaos looms, yet Finch - who promised voters a \$600 tax cut - finds the money to reward big

campaign contributors financing his race."

In addition to Beccaro, attorney Ed Maley, another major Finch financial supporter, has received in excess of \$250,000 during the Finch term. Other high profile law firms such as Pullman & Comley, Robinson and Cole, and Berchem, Moses & Devlin have received millions in legal fees.

A list of some of the best-known law firms is provide below followed by the total paid to the firm since Finch took office.

As of April 20, 2011:

William Beccaro, Attorney at Law
250,000

Berchem, Moses & Devlin
98,354.35

John P. Bohannon, Jr.*
529,149.52
***Finch's private counsel in 2007 Caruso Election Court Case**

Durant, Nichols & Houston*
2,256,459.30
***Includes Board of Education**

Pullman & Comley
749,046.04

Robinson & Cole
1,379,497.74

Updike, Kelley & Spellacy
155,251.94

Legal fees and expenses associated with the Port Authority, Workers' Compensation, WPCA, certain foreclosures, and Central Grants expenditures are not included in this report as the information was not provide in the response to the FOI request.

City spreadsheets and People for Excellence in Government PAC expenditures are available for inspection.

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